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# U.S. Loss of Moscow Workers Seen Costly

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The Soviet Union's withdrawal of 260 Russians employed as support workers at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow will cause immediate, major disruptions in the embassy's ability to function, and in the long term is likely to be very costly, senior State Department officials said yesterday.

The officials, who asked not to be identified, said that was the case even though administration spokesmen said that the United States is prepared to live with the loss and that American diplomats in Moscow can cope with the situation.

However, officials familiar with the embassy's operations said the United States now faces the task of providing large numbers of cooks, drivers, clerks and other personnel to keep the mission functioning.

While the numbers will be kept as low as possible, the officials added, these non-diplomats will fill many of the 251 U.S. diplomatic assignments available in the Soviet Union and cut deeply into the embassy's ability to perform its mission.

In addition, the officials said, some positions that now must be staffed by Americans will be very difficult to fill because they require such skilled workers as automobile mechanics, electricians and carpenters who have ample employment opportunities at home.

To recruit the necessary workers, the officials said, might require resorting to high pay that will drain the State Department's pinched operating budget. Moreover, no housing is available in Moscow for large numbers of new American personnel.

The situation stems from the clash that began last month when the United States ordered the Soviets to cut 25 members from their U.N. Mission. On Sunday, the Soviets retaliated by expelling five U.S. diplomats.

The United States struck back Tuesday by declaring five Soviet diplomats in this country persona non grata and ordering 50 more to leave the country by Nov. 1 in order to reduce the combined Soviet diplomatic presence at its embassy here and its San Francisco consulate to 251.

That would create a situation of parity with the United States, which has 251 diplomats in Moscow and Leningrad.

Yesterday, the Soviets withdrew their nationals from employment at the embassy and

expelled five more Americans. The Reagan administration made no immediate, official response to that action, and administration officials said last night that a decision has not been made about whether to retaliate further or halt the expulsions.

"It's a presidential decision, and he hasn't acted on it yet," one White House official said.

"In the earlier case, we had warned the Soviets very explicitly that, if they retaliated for the cuts in their U.N. Mission, we would move to parity on their diplomats accredited to the United States. In this latest instance, there was not such a warning so that the president could have flexibility in deciding how to respond."

Senior administration officials, speaking on condition that they not be identified, said all of the Soviets involved in the U.S. expulsion orders were connected to the Soviet "espionage apparatus in this country" and that their departure has "decapitated" Moscow's American intelligence network.

They said those expelled included chiefs and other senior executives of the Soviet KGB and military intelligence or GRU operations in Washington, New York and San Francisco. They identified only one by name, saying Lev Zaytsev was the KGB "resident," or station chief, in San Francisco.

The officials conducting the briefing represented parts of the administration other than the State Department.

They estimated that about one-third of the approximately 900 Soviet officials stationed in the United States are full-time intelligence officers.

With the expulsion of 80 of the most senior people in this group, one said, "There is no management left . . . There will be no senior leadership."

Their remarks tended to confirm indirectly disagreements between the State Department and other agencies over the wisdom of imposing the parity policy on the Soviets at this time.

State Department officials, noting that the department had planned to replace some Soviet employees with Americans, said the goal had been to send about 80 Americans to Moscow over the next 1½ years under the old U.S.-Soviet agreement that permitted each government to post 320 persons with official status in the other country.

However, the officials at the briefing contended that the administration never contemplated increasing the U.S. presence to 320 and instead had been seeking to reduce the numbers as a means of cutting the number of Soviet intelligence officials here under diplomatic guise.

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